REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated April 20, 2006. Claims 1 to 6, 11 to 23, 29 and 30 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 11, 17, 23, 29 and 30 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 20, 23, 29 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,573,910 (Duke) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,933,676 (Ohno). Claims 3, 13, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Duke in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,987,225 (Okano). Claims 5, 15, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Duke in view of Ohno, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,048,117 (Banton). Claims 6, 16 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Duke in view of Ohno, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,802,260 (Shimakawa). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

The present invention concerns operation of image forming apparatuses wherein two types of information are stored. One type of information shows that the calibration of an image forming apparatus is executed and a second type of information shows that the image forming apparatus is ready to accept a job, A process managing print jobs assigns a job to another image forming apparatus without assigning the job to the image forming apparatuses, based on the two types of information. Alternatively, the process may assign to an image forming apparatus a job assigned to another image forming apparatus.

Because two types of information are stored, a controller can correctly grasp the status of the image forming apparatus. For example, the controller can determine whether the image forming apparatus is ready to accept a job required for calibration, even if the calibration of the image forming apparatus is being executed.

However, if only one type of information is stored showing either that the calibration of one image forming apparatus is executed or that the image forming apparatus is ready to accept a job, the controller cannot determine whether the image forming apparatus is ready to accept a job required for calibration, if the calibration of the image forming apparatus is being executed.

Turning now to specific claim language, amended independent Claim 1 is directed to a controller which can communicate with a plurality of image forming apparatuses for executing a job and transmit to one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses data for performing calibration of the image forming apparatus. The controller includes a memory unit adapted to store information showing that the calibration of one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses is executed and second information showing that the one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses is ready to accept a job; and a job managing unit adapted to assign to another of the plurality of image forming apparatuses a job assigned to the one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses, in the event that the first information is stored by said memory unit even if the second information is stored by the memory unit.

Claims 11, 17 and 23 are directed to a method, program and storage medium, respectively, in accordance with Claim 1.

Claim 29 is directed to a controller which can communicate with a plurality of image forming apparatuses for executing a job and transmit to one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses data for performing calibration of the image forming apparatus, comprising: a memory unit adapted to store first information showing that the calibration of one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses is executed and second information showing that the one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses is ready to accept a job; and a job managing unit adapted to assign a job to another of the plurality of image forming apparatuses without assigning the job to the one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses, in the event that the first information is stored by said memory unit even if the second information is stored by said memory unit.

Claim 30 is directed to a method in accordance with Claim 29.

The applied references, namely Duke and Ohno, either alone or in combination, are not seen to disclose or to suggest all of the features of independent Claims 1, 11, 17, 23, 29 and 30. In particular, the applied references are not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of storing information showing that the calibration of one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses is executed and second information showing that the one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses is ready to accept a job, and assigning to another of the plurality of image forming apparatuses a job assigned to the one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses, in the event that the first information is stored by said memory unit even if the second information is stored by said memory unit (as featured in Claims 1, 11, 17 and 23.) Nor do the applied references, either alone or in combination, disclose or suggest storing first information showing that the calibration of one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses is executed and second information showing that the one of the plurality of image forming

apparatuses is ready to accept a job, and assigning a job to another of the plurality of image forming apparatuses without assigning the job to the one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses, in the event that the first information is stored by said memory unit even if the second information is stored by said memory unit (as featured in Claims 29 and 30).

Duke discloses a system server that interacts with each of a plurality of remote processing equipment to process jobs requested by a customer(s). A remote processing equipment database 1350 stores various kinds of information about jobs, customers and remote processing equipment 1320. The database 1350 may provide information to the scheduler/rescheduler 1340 about both previous and current states of the remote processing equipment 1320. The current state of the remote processing equipment consists of information such as powered up, initializing, ready, busy (with an error code), calibrating, powered down and the like. See column 7, lines 13-24. It is impossible in Duke to grasp whether the printer is ready or busy for a job required for calibration, if the current state indicates calibrating. Namely, Duke has the same problem as discussed above.

Ohno shows an external device 101 that generates calibration data based on status information showing the status of a printer 102 and sends the calibration data to the printer. The external device does not store information showing that the calibration of the printer is being executed.

In light of the deficiencies of Duke and Ohno as discussed above, Applicant submits that amended independent Claims 1, 11, 17, 23, 29 and 30 are now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

The other pending claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed allowable for at least the same reasons. However, as each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual consideration of each dependent claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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